

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

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TAGS: SWEL BL

SUBJECT: BOLIVIA FLOOD DISASTER

FOLLOWING TELEX RECEIVED FROM UN DISASTER RELIEF COORDINATOR
GENEVA BASED ON INFO FROM UNDRO DIRECTOR ROSSBOROUGH IN
LA PAZ:

OTE

A. GENERAL

EMERGENCY CREATED BY FLOODS CONTINUES AND IN DEPARTMENTS
OF BENI AND SANTA CRUZ AND SOME OTHER AREAS, FLOODS ARE STILL
SPREADING. DATA DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN BUT AREAS AFFECTED
APPEAR TO BE FIRST, BENI DEPARTMENT WHERE RIVER MAMORE
REPORTED FLOODING ALONG 250 KILOMETERS LENGTH AND IN PLACES
UP TO 100 KILOMETERS BREADTH. SECOND, SANTA CRUZ DEPART-
MENT ALONG RIO GRANDE AND TRIBUTARIES. THIRD, COCHABAMA
DEPARTMENT ALONG RIO CHAPARE AND TRIBUTARIES. FORTH LA
PAZ AND ORURO DEPARTMENTS AROUND LAKE TITICACA, AROUND
PUERTO LINARES BELOW LA PAZ CITY, AND ALONG RIO DESAGUA-
DERO. FIFTH, IN TARIZA DEPARTMENT WHERE FLOODS FIRST
REPORTED SITUATION APPEARS TO BE SLOWLY IMPROVING. EXTENT
OF FLOOD THIS YEAT GREATLY EXCEED NORMAL FLOODING ENCOUN-
TERED EVERY YEAR - WATER IN RIO MAMORE ZONE IS 1 TO 1-1/2
METERS ABOVE NORMAL HIGHEST POINT IN RAINY SEASON. THIS
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HAS CREATED NOVEL EMERGENCY SITUATION WITH MAJOR

IMPLICATIONS FOR HEALTH, LIVESTOCK AND CROPS COMPLICATED BY INTERRUPTIONS IN TRANSPORT SYSTEM. COUNTRY WAS ALREADY FACING PROBLEMS RELATING TO FOOD IMPORTS DUE TO WORLD PRICE INCREASES AND NOW FURTHER FACTOR OF FLOOD DAMAGE TO LIVESTOCK AND CROPS FOR HOME CONSUMPTION AND EXPORT THREATENS TO LEAD TO SERIOUS FOOD SCARCITY SITUATION AND BALANCE OF PAYMENTS DIFFICULTIES LATER IN YEAR. FOLLOWING PARAGRAPHS SURVEY AND RELIEF NEEDS BY SECTORS.

B. TRANSPORT

WORLD BANK TRANSPORT MISSION WAS IN BOLIVIA FOR PURPOSE UNRELATED FLOODS BUT ALSO CARRIED OUT PRELIMINARY SURVEY. SITUATION APPEARS TO BE FOLLOWING: FIRST, RAILWAY LINES LA PAZ-ORURO-COCHABAMBA WASHED OUT AND ALL TRAFFIC STOPPED. SECOND, ALL ROAD TRAFFIC STOPPED BETWEEN SANTA CRUZ-CAMIRI AND SUCRE-CAMIRI. THIRD, TRAFFIC EXPERIENCING GREAT DIFFICULTIES ON ROAD SANTA-CRUZ-COCHABAMBA AND ORURO-COCHABAMBA WHERE TEMPORARY STOPPAGES ARE OCCURRING. FOURTH, MAJOR DAMAGE EXISTS TO MANY OTHER ROADS. FIFTH, RAILWAY TRAFFIC FROM ARGENTINA IS STOPPED AT ORURO WHERE GOODS HAVE TO BE TRANSFERRED TO TRUCKS RESULTING IN UNUSUALLY HEAVY ROAD TRAFFIC WHICH IS DAMAGING NEWLY BUILT ROAD BETWEEN ORURO AND LA PAZ. (TELEX GARBLED), ELIMINATION OF RAIL TRAFFIC ON ORURO-COCHABAMBA AXIS AND INCREASED ROAD TRAFFIC IS DAMAGING THAT ROAD. EVEN WHERE ROADS AND BRIDGES STILL PASSABLE AND RAILWAYS IN OPERATION, OPERATING CONDITIONS HAVE WORSENERED SIGNIFICANTLY RESULTING IN HAZARDS, SLOW MOVEMENT OF TRAFFIC, AND HIGH OPERATING COSTS. TOTAL SITUATION OF STOPPAGE AND SLOWDOWN MUST HAVE SERIOUS EFFECT ON ECONOMY ESPECIALLY IN LIGHT DEGREE OF BOLIVIA'S DEPENDENCE ON FOREIGN TRADE. RESULTS OF WORLD BANK PRELIMINARY SURVEY AWAITED.

C. HEALTH

FIRST, NO REPORT NO OUTBREAK OF DISEASE REPORTED SO FAR. SECOND, HEALTH MINISTRY AND WHO ARE TAKING PREVENTIVE MEASURES FOR WHICH THEY REQUIRE VACCINES, SERUM AND OTHER MEDICAL SUPPLIES. (MOST OF THESE REQUIREMENTS BEING MET BY CONTRIBUTIONS FROM UNICEF, WHO, UNICEF, RED CROSS SOCIETIES AND LEAGUE, VOLUNTARY AGENCIES, OAS, AND VARIOUS GOVERNMENTS). THIRD, THERE IS URGENT NEED FOR EMERGENCY ENVIRONMENTAL SANITATION EQUIPMENT TO RESTORE BASIC DRINKING WATER SUPPLIES AND WASTE DISPOSAL FOR 10,500 PERSONS IN AREAS OF

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BENI, LAKE TITICACA, SUBURBS OF LA PAZ AND SANTA CRUZ DEPARTMENTS. REQUIRED EQUIPMENT IS 50 HANDPUMPS, 10 MOTOR PUMPS, CEMENT AND PIPING, AND ONE 4-WHEEL DRIVE VEHICLE FOR LAKE TITICACA AND LA PAZ AREAS. TOTAL ESTIMATED COST IS US \$69,500 OF WHICH \$36,400 AVAILABLE FROM LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND HEALTH MINISTRY, LEAVING BALANCE REQUIRED OF \$33,100. CONTRIBUTIONS IN CASH OR KIND TO MEET THIS NEED ARE URGENTLY INVITED.

D. LIVESTOCK AND AGRICULTURE

MEETINGS WITH MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FAO REPRESENTATIVE, CHIEF, AGRICULTURE SECTION/USAID, WORLD BANK EXPERT ON LIVESTOCK, AND HEAD OF FEDERATION OF LIVESTOCK OWNERS OF BENI DEPARTMENT PRODUCED FOLLOWING GENERAL CONCLUSIONS: FIRST, LIVESTOCK: SOME 500,000 HEAD OF CATTLE IN BENI DEPT. AFFECTED, I.E., REQUIRED TO BE MOVED FROM FLOODED AREA ESTIMATED AT SOME 25,000 SQUARE KILOMETERS. ALREADY GREAT LOSS OF CALVES. LOSS OF PRODUCTION FROM VAST FLOODED ZONE ALREADY CERTAIN TO BE MOST SERIOUS BOTH FOR HOME CONSUMPTION AND AS FACTOR IN EXPORT TRADE. PREVENTIVE VACCINATION CAMPAIGN ESSENTIAL AND OTHER TREATMENT AGAINST MAADIES DIRECTLY ATTRIBUTABLE TO FLOODS. WITH COOPERATION FAO, ESTIMATE VACCINES REQUIRED FOR EMERGENCY PROGRAM IS BEING PREPARED. SECOND, AGRICULTURE: ESTIMATES DAMAGE TO CROPS AND TYPES AND QUANTITIES OF SEEDS AND TOOLS AS EMERGENCY REQUIREMENTS ARE NOT YET TO HAND. NEVERTHELESS VERY LARGE NUMBERS OF PEASANT FARMERS HAVE CERTAINLY LOST THEIR MEANS OF LIVELIHOOD AND WILL REQUIRE SUBSIDIES UNTIL NEXT HARVEST AND PROVISION SEEDS AND TOOLS.

E. LOCAL RELIEF COORDINATION IS HEADED BY MINISTER DEFENSE AS CHAIRMAN-NATIONAL EMERGENCY COMMITTEE, WITH DAY-TO-DAY COORDINATION ASSURED BY CORONEL JORGE DE LA VEGA WHO IS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ALDE-ALIMENTOS PARA EL DESARROLLO- A GOVERNMENT BODY REPORTING TO PRESIDENCY OF REPUBLIC AND NATIONAL COUNTERPART TO WORLD FOOD PROGRAM.

F. ADDRESSEES ARE INVITED TO INFORM UNDRO GENEVA PROMPTLY OF CONTRIBUTIONS MADE OR CONTEMPLATED. END QTEDALE

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